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ANTY 595.03: Special Topics - Forensic Casework

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ANTY 595: Forensic Casework

Instructor: Dr. Katie Baca
Email: katherine.baca@umontana.edu
Meetings by appointment only

Goals and Purpose:

Successful students in this class will:

- Gain an understanding of Human Osteology and Forensic Anthropology.
- Learn how to analyze a human skeleton using forensic techniques in order to determine/estimate a biological profile, which can include sex, age, pathology, trauma and other various pieces of information concerning the individual.
- Learn how to accurately report these findings.
- Gain hands-on experience to real forensic casework.

Texts, Readings and Class Materials: There is no required text for this class, however a copy of White's Field Manual, The Human Bone Manual, would be very beneficial. If you don't already have this book and you plan to study human osteology, you should definitely buy a copy. As for this class however, any required or recommended readings will be provided to you.

Each student will need access to a computer with a camera. These will be used to write reports as well as attend class when meeting over Zoom is necessary. Please contact me if you need help in accessing a computer.

Progress Policy: Class is designed to be flexible to work around the varying types and numbers of cases we may have access to this semester. In order to ensure you are up to date and progressing through the class, please be sure to regularly check your student email, the Slack page, and stay in touch with your group leaders and classmates.

This class does not have an assignment schedule or calendar because our access to casework will change over time. Expectations for students will be laid out each week through email or in person (depending on the university policies for meeting in person).

During week one, each student will be placed into a group which will be led by one of our more experienced graduate students. This group will work together to fully analyze a case. While you will be working in a group, I will expect each student to write their own case report. Groups may or may not be changed as the semester continues based on case work and meeting availability.

In addition to attending the weekly lab the student is assigned to, **all** students will be expected to meet in person on the first Wednesday of every month from 5:30-7:30 pm in SS250. These class sessions will consist of lectures and presentations to enhance your understanding of what may be involved in the job of a forensic anthropologist.

Exams and Assignments: There will be no exams in this course. Assignments will be flexible depending on our access to casework as the semester progresses. As a baseline, I will expect each student to write a complete case report on each case they work on this semester. Each report

will need to be formatted correctly, have few to no grammar and spelling mistakes, and be complete in reporting findings. Each report must also demonstrate that the student learned how to use each analysis technique correctly and accurately.

In addition to each case report, each student will be expected to complete a short write-up on some aspect of each case they work on. This can be anything from a complete summary of a particular bone to a deeper analysis and conversation about a method that was used on the case. This extra assignment is designed to help the students gain a broader understanding of osteology and the methods they are employing. There is no length requirement on these assignments, I simply want to see that the student took extra time to learn something new.

Each case report and extra assignment will be turned into your group leader before it is submitted to Dr. Baca. The group leader will give feedback and ask for revisions as necessary to ensure that the reports submitted to Dr. Baca are finished and polished.

Grades: There will be no grades other than participation in this course. This course is designed to give you hands-on experience in forensic anthropology. This includes the lab analysis as well as report writing. I will expect each student to be involved, ask questions, and submit reports when asked for. I will also expect the student to have good communication throughout the semester. I understand that this course is flexible, however if the student has a time conflict or other circumstance that keeps him/her from participating, I expect the student to tell me right away. If the student does not meet these participation expectations, they will be given warnings before their grade is deducted.

Office Hours: I will not be holding regular office hours, if you need to meet with me, please email me and we will set something up either in person on campus or over Zoom.

Academic Integrity: Students will be held to the provisions of the Student Conduct Code, online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php, with regards to cheating, plagiarism, abusive language, and other issues. Violations will not be tolerated.

Disabilities: Every effort has been made to make the online materials accessible to students with disabilities. If you have a problem accessing the materials please let me know immediately. Please visit the Disability Student Services website for more information.

<http://www.umt.edu/dss/>

Class Meetings 5:30 – 7:30 pm (All students expected to attend these classes as well as their weekly lab)

September 1st

October 6th

November 3rd

December 1st